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THE BYRON FAMILY.

The Latest Phase of the Leigh Scandal
—Mrs. Somerville on Lady Lovelace and Her Relations.

[From the Cincinnati Commercial.]

The day after Christmas, 1871, in a comfortable stone mansion standing at one of the angles of the Brashi Palace, near the Piazza Navona, in Rome, I saw that venerable lady, who had been regarded for forty years as all the savans of Europe, as the most wonderful woman of the century. It was Mrs. Somerville's birthday, and in honor of her having entered—with good health, perfect composure and unimpaired mind—upon her ninety-second year, a friends had called to offer their congratulations.

While Mrs. Somerville was thus chatting about her old friends, lunch was announced. Perceiving to remain behind with the venerable lady, I took occasion, from the absence of the others, to ask her of the conclusion of the Leigh scandal. She said, "I am glad to hear she said, 'Surrounded by all that affluence and position in society, kind friends, a tender husband and promising children—could best be the restless spirit inherited from the Byrons, who had said she was of a high aristocratic race, played for large stakes at cards, quented the rouge-et-noir gambling table during the season at Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden; and, during the railway mania, had absorbed the fortune of a King and engaged deeply into speculations. Lord Lovelace was entirely ignorant of all this, or chose to appear so. She had, besides settlements in the East, a large estate in the West, which she held for her by ante-nuptial deeds, consisting of property inherited from her maternal grandfather, the income of which was her own. The failure of her agent, through whom she had been paying her debts, and whom she had in debts she could not discharge and to save her good name her husband paid them. I think the chagrin arising from this brought on the disease from which died."

"She had all the proud spirit of her father, then?"

"Yes; and combined with that all the extreme eccentricities of her mother. She could not stand the least warmth, and her coldness to her friends. As each morning break took her, such was her mood through the day. You never knew beforehand when you were to find her. She would sometimes (and I regret to say) devote some of her mathematical studies—in La Place's most intricate calculations, in physical astronomy or the calculus—that everything else was forgotten. Again, she would be so absorbed in her study from place to place on the continent, would follow up the disquisitions of Laplace society through a whole season with the crazy eagerness of a girl at her first love. Her mother would be present, and her great horse-race on both sides of the channel, and would gamble unscrupulously everywhere. She was also an extremely selfish and was heedless rash, and it was from this selfishness that she was so much shocked that she retained no constant friends."

"Did she resemble her father or mother most in personal appearance?"

"Her father; and was as beautiful a woman as he was handsome. When she was a girl she lived at Clifton; with her mother, the year before she became Lady Lovelace, I never saw a more lovely young woman. To white clear skin, large, liquid eyes, dark wavy tresses, and a face of such a sweet and winning expression of Lord Noel Byron. Her forehead was lower than Lord Byron's, but only owing to her hair, which she wore in the style of her mother. In La Place's mathematical traces—the influence of gravitation from elliptical motions of the planets to its remote effects on their mutual perturbations—she was a great adept. Her mother, I translated—under my direction for several weeks, and I am sure I never saw clearer understanding embodied in physical beauty so great a degree as there was apparent in hers. You can see whatever you wish of her comprehension of a great astronomical treatise. Besides, her voice was low, sweet, and singularly well modulated."

"Had she any other arid believes, her father's works?"

"I do not know. She never spoke of it whether Lady Byron was present or absent. It could have made no difference, but for that she was a devoted admirer of her mother."

"She had other family troubles besides that which arose from her uneasy disposition, she not, Mrs. Somerville?"

"Her mother, yes; but she was frequent of her father, and consequent estrangement from Lady Noel Byron. Then was that terrible affair about Medora Leigh, which lasted through years, and which kept her mother in a state of such public notoriety. Then there was the Leigh family, never comfortable, always in poverty, about whom the most disgraceful scandals were forever in circulation. You can judge of whatever her mother's story was terrible and disgraceful."

"Whether I do or not of some thing is certain, and that is, the revelation is not, as we suppose, something new. I have heard many things of this kind, and I have seen Lord Byron died. Lady Lovelace believed and always spoke of Medora Leigh, the illegitimate fruit of the incest, as her sister. I Byron regarded Medora Leigh as her husband's child."

"And after this Lady Byron was terms of friendship with Mrs. Leigh, who seems hardly consistent with the belief in an unnatural deed. And besides, Mrs. Leigh lived abroad for many years, after the scandal was afloat."

"Of Lady Byron's conduct in this, as thousands of other instances, no explanation is given that is not in others. She was a woman entirely self-governing, never sure of herself, never trustworthy to her friends or the world. Whenever the cold of the north pole blew down upon her, she was a different woman. She was no longer subject to ordinary motives. I can conceive of her making a bosom friend of Mrs. Leigh, as she did, as she believed the alleged incest, and as she was a devoted admirer of her mother. Mrs. Leigh's likes and dislikes were as much under their own control as they were without. The many schools of which she was patroness were no rules which she would arbitrarily alter, nor engagements which would not deliberately break. As for Leigh's remaining with his wife after he had heard the scandal, he had, in fact, been married to her for many years, and he was without the pride that scorns an ill-taking or the force that wine breeds, he from the beginning a beneficiary upon his wife's pitance of property. Besides he loved his wife, and there is that to be said for him."

"Running down through several generations, I am told?"

"Yes; from Admiral Byron to Lady Lovelace, and from Lord Ockham, there were steps, every one making a lower descent to its predecessor. It was a good thing for the family and the world that death cut short the disgraceful career of the last. Without the stigma of his race, he inherited all its vices. Cast aside from the army for cowardice, expelled from the navy for petty larceny, shipping before the mast, in a Dutch vessel, and begging for a cabin passage on a small steamer, he came to a bad end. He was a touter among the wharves of New York, and dying of delirium tremens while in the city of the dead. He was a man who embodied within himself all the vices of an outlaw and all the meannesses of a scoundrel."

"How about the present inheritor of the title?"

"Ah, my dear sir, we have already brought the rule which tells us to speak only of the dead. With your leave, we will not say another to-day. It is but just to let the world hear that that illustrious family I have heard anything but good."

FOSTER TO BE HUNG.

ALBANY, N. Y., January 10.

In the case of Foster, the city of Albany, in the judgment of the court below, and ordered court to execute its sentence.

—On last Saturday night an explosion took place on the steamer Fulton, at a distance of about five miles from the engine. Several negroes were killed, and the English Ben Berry, and ten negroes badly scalded. The disaster happened at midnight, and the scene was appalling.